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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORTCOUNTRY Lebanon
SUBJECT The Lebanese Elections

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1. The first reports which I have received of the Lebanese elections on 19 Jul 53 point out that, by-and-large, the result has been a victory for President Chamoun in that a majority of the new 44-man unicameral legislature consists of Chamoun's supporters and therefore Christians.
2. This Chamoun legislative majority means that, for the first time, President Chamoun can count upon the Lebanese legislature to cooperate with him on the policies of his administration.
3. Heretofore the Lebanese legislature, or Parliament as it is called, consisted of 77 deputies. The majority of these deputies, while Christian, were nevertheless supporters of the former regime of ex-President Beshara el Khoury. In fact, they were largely responsible for Khoury's downfall and, following Chamoun's succession to the Presidency, tended to oppose him and obstruct his programs from time to time. For this reason, President Chamoun dissolved the Lebanese Parliament on 29 May 53 by a presidential decree, giving as his reason the fact that Parliament failed to carry out properly its legislative duties. He then called the recent elections in an effort more firmly to entrench himself and to elect deputies who would be his supporters rather than supporters of ex-President Khoury. In this undertaking, President Chamoun's principal support came from the Al-Kataeb Party, the Christian Youth Organization in Lebanon.
4. The Al-Kataeb Party began as a group of Christian patriots who gave Lebanon its independence but has now become more of a nationalist party because recently it has begun to admit Mohammedans into its ranks.

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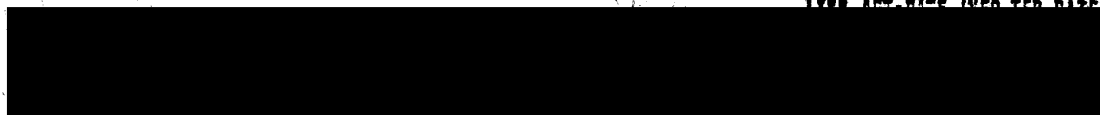
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- 2 -

5. President Chamoun's principal reason for wishing a Christian majority in the Lebanese Parliament is to forestall attempts to integrate Lebanon into the scheme for a Greater Syria, and thus prevent a duplication of the Turkish rule and Turkish oppression which Lebanese Christians have not forgotten.
6. I have not as yet received information as to whether the Cabinet of Lebanese Premier Saeb Salaam is still continuing as the Government of Lebanon. The Cabinet was still functioning during the elections, but the Premier had declared that he would not accept nomination for office in the new Parliament. This Parliament, according to a law which was passed before the old Parliament was dissolved, consists of 44 instead of the previous 77 deputies.
7. For the first time in the history of Lebanon, women were given the right to vote and to run for office.

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